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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 159

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 5900

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MOPS, PINS, CB
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH ACTING PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY

1. AFTERNOON OF APRIL 4 I MET WITH ACTING CHIEF OF STATE SAUKHAM KHOY IN ORDER TO CONVEY TO HIM TEXT OF A MESSAGE LON NOL HAD SENT HIM FROM INDONESIA. SAUKHAM KHOY SAID THAT EVENTS HAD MOVED ON SINCE LON NOL'S DEPARTURE AND HE DOUBTED ANYTHING USEFUL WOULD BE GAINED BY PUTTING OUT OVER THE RADIO THE EXHORTATION WHICH THE MARSHAL WANTED HIM TO BROADCAST TO THE KHMER PUBLIC.

2. SAUKHAM KHOY INQUIRED WHETHER I KNEW ABOUT THE DETERIORATING MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE KC WERE CLOSE TO BATTAMBANG CITY. SAUKHAM KHOY INTERRUPTED ME TO SAY THAT NOT ONLY WAS THE MILITARY SITUATION RAPIDLY DETERIORIATING BUT ALSO THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE WAS CHANGING AGAINST THE REPUBLIC. THE SOLDIERS DO NOT FIGHT HARD AND ABOVE ALL THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OF THEM TO OPPOSE EFFECTIVELY THE KC ATTACKERS. MORE SERIOUS, HOWEVER, WAS THE RESOLUTION PASSED BY A GROUP OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BATTAMBANG CALLING FOR THE END OF THE FIGHTING, SURRENDER OF THE CITY TO CRUNK AND CALLING ON PRINCE SIHANOUK TO RETURN. THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPARENTLY APPROVED BY THE HIGHLY RESPECTED BUDDHIST PATRIARCH OF BATTAMBANG. SAUKHAM
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Tenbay DATE 10/9/80
RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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KHOY SAID IF THIS RESOLUTION CANNOT BE REVOKED, HE FEARED THAT THE CITY WOULD JUST GO OVER TO BRUNK WITHOUT FIGHTING AND THAT THIS EXAMPLE WILL BE COPIED IN OTHER ENCLAVES SUCH AS SIEM REAP, PURSAT, ETC. IN ORDER TO STEM THIS TIDE, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, PAN SOTHI, IS BEING DISPATCHED TO BATTAMBANG TOMORROW.

3. SAUKHAM KHOY WAS CLEARLY DISCOURAGED WITH THE SITUATION IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC. HE SAID LON NOL LEFT TOO LATE AND HE CANNOT REVERSE THE TREND. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE HAD ANY CONTINGENCY PLANS. HE SAID IF THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT FIND A SOLUTION KHMER LEADERSHIP MAY HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO FLEE THE COUNTRY. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH SAUKHAM KHOY AGAIN SUNDAY MORNING AT 0700.
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